

I make this comment as a 12-year (and now former) member of the press corps--both television (network and local news) and print. Sorry I couldn't make it to the public comment session here, but I have two small kids.

The danger of having fewer owners of local media outlets is not so much that the people at the top will dictate what and how to report news. It's the "glom" factor--where a TV station that owns another TV station and a radio station will use one reporter to create a news report for all three outlets (and the web sites that go with them!). Already, you see local stations creating "partnerships" with local newspapers. It's a way of cross-promoting and it appears to be a good thing. But it's at its core a cheap and easy way of generating copy and scripts without having to pay an extra body (or two) to do it. In Seattle, watch KING, KONG and their 24-hour endeavor Northwest Cable News. NWCN has different anchors, but simply re-runs reports that have appeared on other "member" stations in the region. KONG has the same anchors and reporters as KING, but is able to run its news in time slots unfettered by network demands. But the news it delivers is essentially the same. Good thing that KING is a quality news organization. But if they were broadcasting (and re-broadcasting) reports on more stations and maybe generating stories for air from a local newspaper that they might own, the pool of reporters will shrink. And that's the key. The more reporters you have, the more diverse and better the news content will be. But the more media outlets that one owner is allowed to buy, the fewer reporters will have a job, and the greater the pressure on those few reporters to create more content for more outlets. The quality of journalism is sure to fail and the community will not be served in the best way possible.

This "glomming" trend is already happening with the changes made to ownership rules over the last decade. Please preserve the current rules of ownership and keep it from getting worse. Thank you.